

**November 2014**

## **CHAIR'S ANNUAL REPORT – The year in review**

I think it is important to start by acknowledging and celebrating the Sunshine Coast Business Council's 10 years of service to the regional business community. When the business council started in 2004 as a key business advocate it was a group of interested business people who met monthly. Mr John Prescott AC headed the group and David Oliver was a sector representative. UDIA, the University of the Sunshine Coast and Telstra were part of a group of inaugural funding members with David Oliver represented the UDIA on the first board. John Prescott was the inaugural Chair leading a 9 person board. A decade on and we are today farewelling David who has decided to retire as UDIA's representative on the board.

David has been an extremely energetic, enthusiastic and respected board member. I don't think he knows how to be pessimistic. He has contributed in many ways, including as the Treasurer and as a member of the economic portfolio. To show our appreciation to David for his 10 years of service we are proposing to make a change to the Constitution, to be ratified at a General Meeting in March, and make David our first lifetime member. David will continue to be associated with the business council and we are delighted he will do so.

SCBC has evolved in its 10 years but the objectives outlined in the Sunshine Coast Business Council Inc. constitution are still relevant and stand today:

- a) To encourage a membership which is representative of the various business types or industry sectors which are significant participants in the Sunshine Coast region's economy,
- b) To promote the interests of the members of the Business Council through a unified audible and identifiable apolitical voice capable of:
  - i. Advocating its position to the three levels of government, and
  - ii. Providing leadership for the region's broader business community.
- c) To pursue regional economic development including, without limitations, supporting initiatives of other organisations provided that those initiatives are aligned with the objections of the Business Council.

We now see ourselves more strongly defined in a role as economic and business advocate which is a slight shift in emphasis. We underpin our opinions with evidence based research and we speak consistently in the public arena on key economic issues relating to employment, investment and infrastructure.

## **PATRON SPONSOR**



## **CONTACT US**

[www.scbusinesscouncil.com.au](http://www.scbusinesscouncil.com.au)

[info@scbusinesscouncil.com.au](mailto:info@scbusinesscouncil.com.au)

## **BOARD MEMBERS**

**Sandy Zubrinich, Chair**  
Managing Director Zubek Pty Ltd

**Michael Hopkins, D/Chair**  
Regional Manager, Master Builders

**David Oliver - Treasurer**  
Executive Member, UDIA Sunshine Coast

**Tony Sowden - Secretary**  
Principal, Tony Sowden Lawyer

**Simon Ambrose**  
CEO Sunshine Coast Destinations

**Peter Bolton-Hall**  
Executive Member, Property Council Sunshine Coast

**Tim Hughes**  
Treasurer, Suncorp Bank

**Hayden Rudd**  
Finance Manager, NCP Bathrooms and NCP Plumbing Centres

**Tony Vickers**  
Director, Midson Construction

## What we achieved in 2014

### Delivering on SCBC Economic Directions

#### Kawana Hospital and Health Precinct

SCBC maintained a watching brief in regard to the expected ripple effect from the Kawana Hospital and Health Precinct evident in the broader economy. Key to this was a presentation to the Board from Stockland outlining the status of development of land in the health precinct. As of October 2014, land sales have been very successful. Construction of buildings in the health precinct are anticipated in 2015. Strong employment is also coming through from the Private Hospital.

#### Status

SCBC will continue to monitor the strength of the ripple effect and whether best practice multipliers are being achieved from this major 'game changer' development.

#### Maroochydore Principle Activity Centre (PAC)

SCBC met with Sunshine Coast Council early in 2014 to receive a briefing on the Maroochydore PAC development scheme and made a submission to the draft scheme which we reported to members at the time.

We again discussed the PAC with the Mayor earlier this week when we mentioned the low level of interest the development had received in the 2014 Investment Market Survey. We look forward to discussing this with the new independent entity being established to manage the PAC.

#### Status

SCBC will continue to work with Council and the new PAC management entity, and other stakeholder organisations to advocate on a progressive grand vision for Maroochydore.

#### Extension of Sunshine Coast Airport

SCBC welcomed the EIS for the airport upgrade project and encouraged our members to positively respond to the EIS. We remain committed to continuing to provide our support for this project. SCBC has made a submission to the draft EIS outlining our support for the airport expansion project and its criticality in achieving much of the REDS.

#### Status

SCBC will continue to work with Council to attract private and government funding this critical project.

#### Upgrade to Bruce Highway

SCBC worked consistently with a range of stakeholders to advocate for the urgent need to upgrade the highway, including between Caboolture and the Sunshine Coast. The highway upgrade has now been recognised by all levels of government as a critical infrastructure upgrade needed for the region.

#### Status

SCBC will continue to work with stakeholders to advocate federal and state governments for funding to be allocated to the upgrade of the Bruce Highway from Caboolture to the Sunshine Coast.

## Evidenced Based Research

SCBC commissioned two (2) research project in 2014:

- **Agribusiness, Released February 2014**, undertaken on behalf of SCBC as pre-reading for the March Forum to set the background for discussion. The research focussed on the Sunshine Coast and covered:
  - *Trends in agribusiness industry*
  - *Changing composition of agribusiness*
  - *Lessons Learned*
  - *Strengths and Threats*
  - *National and international demand*
  - *Case Studies*
- **Investment Market Survey, November 2014**. This is the second such survey and included 30 businesses who invest in regions nationally and internationally, including the Sunshine Coast. This survey, released today, and will be available on the SCBC website from next Monday.

## Forums

SCBC conducted two (2) forums in 2014.

- **Future of Agribusiness on Sunshine Coast – Where to Invest.** Held in March 2014, this was an invitation only conference targeting 50 farmers and growers to discuss industry growth opportunities on the Coast. They were joined by 20 people from banking, USC and the three levels of government. This was supported by SCBC research which provided a snapshot (pulse) on how the agribusiness was currently performing.

An action plan was developed by SCBC with the input of industry and state and local government representatives. It was circulated to all participants and has been drawn upon in the work being undertaken by the SCC Agribusiness Taskforce.
- **Youth Employment Roundtable.** Held in May 2014, this was the six month follow up to the November 2013 Youth Prosperity Forum. It was a small working group to review what had happened in the six months following the first conference. It reviewed how the Youth Services, health, employment and social linked and considered whether there was an issue with graduates finding work after completion of their studies or whether the issue was more general.

## Regional Economic Development Strategy (REDS)

SCBC joined with other key stakeholders during the year to monitor and discuss the progress of REDS activities. In just delivering our charter we impact many areas of the REDS as demonstrated in the SCBC Economic Directions, outlined earlier.

We were leading in the work we contributed in the Agribusiness Taskforce and will continue to work with the taskforce as required.

The feedback and insights gained from the 2014 Investment Market Survey have been shared with the Mayor of SCC and should be useful in giving consideration to how initiatives such as the Airport, PAC and the Solar Farm are marketed to the investment market.

## Summary

Everyone here today can attest to how busy this year has been. However, it has been a good year and between us I think we can feel satisfied we moved forward as a region. I believe that the level of cooperation between government and industry has been stronger this year and the collaboration between industry groups has further strengthened and that is what makes us stronger to advocate on behalf of the Sunshine Coast.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the following Board members who are leaving the board for their contribution throughout 2014:

- Mr Michael Hopkins for his four years of service and the work he has done as the Deputy Chair.
- Mr Peter Bolton-Hall for his three years as the Property Council representative on the coast.
- Mr Tim Hughes for his work early in the year and who due to work commitments could not continue.
- Mr David Oliver for his 10 years of persistence and dedication.

A big welcome our new members. We look forward to working with you:

- Mr Tim Boag representing UDIA
- Mr Mark Skinner, Narrows Escape Rainforest Resort
- Mr Ben Simpson, Stockland
- Mr Dustin Welch representing PCA (Qld) SC representative

2014 was a tough year economically for Australia and for Queensland. 2015 is likely to have its challenges as well. We start off with a state election, probably in March, and after that we hope we can get down to the business of growing and strengthening our regional economy.

SCBC board and members will set our direction for 2015 at our strategy workshop in late February. We hope to have about a dozen members again contribute their views to what our focus should be.

Our success very much depends on our sponsors and members. We need our big business members to put pressure on other big businesses to add their weight to the voice of the business council. Successful advocacy only comes with the strength of the membership base and we need to keep building on this in 2015.

I would like to thank TAFE East Coast for again standing up as Patron Sponsor in what has been a financially challenging year for them. We are grateful for your continued support. I also thank those members and businesses who step in as event sponsors when asked. We have other in-kind sponsors such as BDO who do our audit work, Mach Technologies who provide our web hosting and Telstra who provide our telecommunication and venue support. Thank you so much. I would like to give a special thanks to Fresh PR who has done an outstanding job on our media work this year and to the SCC who provided a small grant from the Sunshine Coast Council Community Partnership Funding Program.

I would like to thank you our members for your commitment to the Sunshine Coast and the Sunshine Coast Business Council. Lastly, thank you to the Board for their time, efforts and cooperation over the past 12 months. They have been terrific to work with and I have appreciated their strong support.

Merry Christmas and all the best for the New Year.